

Obesity Prevention –New Mexico – 2013



Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

- Regular physical activity has a number of health benefits for youth. It helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles, reduces the risk of becoming overweight or obese, and **may improve students' academic performance.** (CDC. Physical Activity Facts. *Adolescent and School Health. 2012*; www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm.)
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children and youth aged 6-17 should engage in 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day, and vigorous activity at least 3 days per week. (*Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans At-A Glance: A Fact Sheet for Professionals. 2008*; www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/factsheetprof.aspx.)

Childhood Obesity

- Childhood obesity is a growing public health concern in the United States. Obesity has both immediate and long-term affects for youth. It is associated with poor physical and mental health outcomes, including high cholesterol and high blood pressure, bone and joint problems, diabetes, and psychological problems including stigmatization and poor self-esteem. (CDC. Child Obesity Facts. *Adolescent and School Health. 2012*; www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm.)

Among New Mexico High School Students:

- *26.3% exercised every day in the past 7 days;*
- *Students who earned mostly A's or B's in schools (28.5%) were more likely to exercise every day than those who earned mostly C's, D's, or F's (21.8%);*
- *27.9% drank one or more soda per day;*
- *27.3% were overweight or obese; and*
- *American Indian students (40.5%) reported the highest rate of being overweight or obese followed by African Americans (25.8%), Hispanic (26.2%) then Whites (20.4%).*

Source: New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey – High School Survey Results 2011

Currently in New Mexico

The New Mexico Public Education Department receives:

- USDE funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers that fund afterschool programming at approximately 100 sites across the state. Quality afterschool programming must have"
 - Academic enrichment;
 - Physical activity; and
 - Nutrition.
- Mott Foundation Grant funding to support the work of the New Mexico Afterschool Alliance (www.afterschoolalliancennm.com). The Alliance is focusing on the development of quality before and afterschool standards and supports, through NMPED, technical assistance training opportunities for afterschool providers with an emphasis on physical activity and nutrition, among others.

- USDA funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). Section 19 of the National School Lunch Act requires that schools with the highest free and reduced price enrollment be given priority for participating in the FFVP. This program benefits New Mexico low income student populations that generally have fewer opportunities to consume fresh fruits and vegetables on a regular basis.
- On December 13, 2010, President Obama signed into law Public Law 111-296, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). This historic legislation marked the most comprehensive changes to the school nutrition environment in more than a generation. The last update to school meals standards was over 15 years ago. Since that time, tremendous advancements in our understanding of human nutrition have occurred. In response to that reality, the HHFKA required USDA to update school meal nutrition standards to reflect the most current dietary science. The Student Nutrition Bureau has provided trainings and guidance to New Mexico's Food Service Directors to ensure the successful implementation of these changes.
 - The timing of this legislation and USDA's standards are critically needed to help combat the epidemic of childhood obesity as well as the urgent problem of childhood hunger. Nearly 1 in 3 children are at risk for preventable diseases like diabetes and heart disease due to overweight and obesity. If left unaddressed, health experts tell us that our current generation of children may well have a shorter lifespan than their parents. Additionally, during 2010 over 17 million households in the United States, representing over 32 million adults and over 16 million children, struggled to put enough food on the table. For many of these children, a school meal is the only nutritious source of food they can count on.

Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Funding in New Mexico

- The New Mexico Legislature passed HB 208, *School Physical Education Programs and Costs*, during the 2007 legislative session. The bill added physical education program units and charters school student activities program units into the program coast of the SEG. The goal was a four year phase-in of elementary physical education across the state. Funds, benefitting approximately 40 -50% of elementary schools (based on free and/or reduced-fee lunch), were earmarked in FY08 and FY09. A full four year phase-in did not occur due to unavailability of continued funds.
- The New Mexico Legislature last appropriated funds targeting Anti- Obesity Programs (Special Projects) in the 2008 legislative session (FY09) in the amount of \$300,000.00 . Funds were earmarked for flowthrough to districts and/or sites for before and after school physical activity and nutrition programs, and trainings and technical assistance opportunities to include the Nutrition Track of the School Health Education Institute (an institute for health educators across the state) among others.

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